

A Petition presented by Praise-God Barebone, &c.

[Feb. 9, 1659/60 22th 7/223]

To the Parliament of the Common-wealth of England.

The Representation and Adresse of the Well-affected Persons, Inhabitants of the Cities of London and Westminster, and places adjacent, being faithfull and Constant Adherers to this Parliament, who are resolved (by the assistance of Almighty God) to stand by, assert and maintain their Authority, against all opposers, notwithstanding the present confidence and bold attempts of the Promoters of Regall Interest, by the declared Enemies of their Cause and Authority.

WHereas the good Old Cause was for Civil and Christian Liberty, against oppression and persecution; The Oppressours and Persecutours, were chiefly the King, his Lords and Clergy, and their Adherents; who to effect their designs, raised War against the Parliament.

Whereupon the Parliament, in defence of Civil and Christian Liberty, call the oppressed and persecuted to their aid, by whose assistance the Oppressours and Persecutours have been subdued, Kingship and Peerage abolished, and persecution checked; by which the number of conscientious friends to the Parliament, have been to exceedingly increased, that they are now (by Gods assistance) in a far more able capacity of keeping down their enemies, then they were in those times when they subdued them.

Nevertheless, so watchfull hath the restless enemy been, to make advantage; that what (time after time) he hath lost in the Field, he hath endeavoured to regain, even in the Parliaments Council, where because they had not the Face openly to bring in the King, with the former oppressions and persecutions, they shrowded and veiled themselves, one while under a Personal Treaty, another while, under a Cloak of zeal, against blasphemy and Heresie, their endeavours being to bring in the King upon any termes; to cherish the persecuting party, and to brow-beat their most conscientious Opposers.

Upon which pretences, nevertheless, they have, through tract of time and the unselednesse of Government, prevailed so far, as under the notion of a moderate party, to get the subtilty of their Friends, into many places of Trust and Command, both Civil and Military, through whose countenance and encouragement, albeit the Parliament, upon good grounds, Voted the Government by Kings and Lords uselesse, but then some and dangerous; and declare very largely for liberty of conscience, yet of late a general boldnesse hath been taken, to plead a necessity of returning to the Government of King and Lords, a taking in of the Kings Son, or which is all one, for a return; of the justly secluded Members, or a free Parliament, without due Qualifications, whereby the Good Old Cause of Liberty and Freedom (so long contended for against Regall Interest, with the expence of much Bloud and Treasure) and the Assertors thereof, will be prostituted to satisfy the lusts of the Enemies of the Commonwealth, wherein they have prevailed so far, that unlesse all conscientious persons in Parliament, Army, Navy and Commonwealth, do speedily unite, and watchfully look about them, as the Sword will certainly (though secretly and silently) be Rotten out of their hands: so also will they find all Civil Authority fall suddenly into the hands of their enraged enemies, and a return of all those violences, oppressions and persecutions which have cost so much Blood and Treasure to extirpate.

The Serious apprehensions whereof, hath stirred up your cordiall friends to desire you to use all possible endeavours to prevent the Commonwealths adversaries in this their most dangerous Stratagem; And as the most effectual means thereunto. We pray,

1. That you will admit no person or persons to sit, or Vote in this, or any future Parliament, or Council of State, or to be in any Office or Iudicatory, or any publick Trust in the Commonwealth, or Command in the Army, Navy, or Garrisons, or to be a publick Preacher to the people at Sea or Land, or any instructor of youth, except such only as shall abjure, or by Solemn Engagement renounce the pretended Title, or Titles of Charles Stewart, and the whole Line of the late King James; and of every other person as a single person, pretending, or which shall pretend to the Crown, or Government of these Nations of England, Scotland and Ireland, or any of them, and the Dominions and Territories belonging to them, or any of them, or any other single person, Kingship, Peerage, or any power co-ordinate with the peoples Representatives in Parliament; And all coercive power in matter of Religion, according to a Vote of a Grand Committee of this Parliament of the 11 of Sept. 1659.

2. We further pray, That it may be enacted, that whosoever shall move, offer, or propose in Parliament, Council, or any other Court, or publick meeting, any matter or thing, in order to the introducing of Charles Stewart, or any of that Family as aforesaid or any other single Person, House of Lords, Coercive power in matters of Religion, or any power co-ordinate with the peoples Representatives in Parliament, may be deemed & adjudged guilty of High Treason, & may suffer the pains and penalties thereof. And that whosoever shall in Parliament, Council, or any other publick Court, or meeting, move for, or propose the revocation of this Law (when by you Enacted) may be deemed and judged guilty of High Treason, and suffer the pains and penalties thereof.

In the prosecution whereof, we shall stand by you, with our Estates and Lives, to assert and maintain your Authority, against all oppositions whatsoever: Notwithstanding the present Confidence, and bold Attempts of Yours and our Enemies.

Signed by &c.